

Mr. *Woolston's* Defence

OF HIS

DISCOURSES

ON THE

MIRACLES

OF OUR

SAVIOUR,

Against the *Bishops* of St. DAVID'S
and LONDON, and his other
Adversaries.

PART I.

The SECOND EDITION.

Res Religionis non Verberibus sed Verbis est peragenda.
Lactant.

L O N D O N.

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1900



TO THE
QUEEN.

MADAM,



*NOT long since the Bishop
of St. David's presented
to Your Majesty his Vin-
dication; as I would
have done this my De-
fence, if I had known how to get
Access to Your Royal Presence.*

Your

THE DEDICATION.

Your Majesty will perceive, that here's a sad War broke out between the Bishop and my self, about Miracles; which, in all probability, will cost a large Effusion of Words; and, unless Your Majesty can accommodate the Difference, will hardly be terminated without the Slaughter of many Notions and Arguments.

The Bishop is for making Your Majesty the Arbitress of our Controversy, which I consent to; and he talks of Your singular Qualifications to preside at it, which I as certainly believe, as that a Bishop will not lye nor flatter.

Had I known before of Your Majesty's Abilities at this Controversy, I should have gone near to have applauded You for them; and the World would readily have believed my Praises

THE DEDICATION.

ses of You to be just, because I had no Bishoprick nor Translation in View for them.

If Your Majesty has no extraordinary Talent at this Controversy, I trust, You are wiser than to think the better of Your self for the Bishop's Compliment. You'll not be vain; tho' he is fulsome.

But the Bishop, Madam, has done me wrong. He would insinuate, that I am dissaffected to the King's Title and Government; which is entirely false. I Love and Honour Your whole Royal Family, and often pray for Your Majesty too, without Pay, which is more than any Bishop in England has done for You.

And what are my Prayers for Your Majesty? That God may prolong

The DEDICATION:

*long Your Days to the Comfort of
Your Royal Progeny, and the Joy of
these Nations; That the Felicity of
Your Life may be uninterrupted by
Enemies and Misfortunes; and That
after a good old Age, when Life is
no longer desirable to the happiest
Princes, You may be transferr'd to an
heavenly and immortal Crown of Glo-
ry. This is the hearty and voluntary
Prayer of,*

M A D A M,

Your Majesty's

*London, Sept.
27. 1729.*

most humble,

most obedient,

and faithful Servant,

Thomas Woolston.



the same Part.

DEFENCE

OF THE

DISCOURSES ON *Miracles*.



At last, one Volume of *Bishop Smalbrooke's* mountainous Work, that the *Press* has been so long pregnant with, is brought forth: And I don't doubt, but it answers the Expectations of the *Clergy*, who will extol it to the Skies and applaud it to the Populace, as an absolute Confutation of my *Discourses*; but I would advise them, if it be not too late,

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not to be too profuse in their Commendations of it, for fear that an Occasion should be given them to blush for their want of Judgment. We have had Instances of Books before now (and one very remarkable, in the Case of *Boyle* against *Bentley*) that have met with a general Approbation, till they have been sifted into, and upon Examination found empty; and it is not impossible, but *this* of the *Bishop* before us may meet with the same Fate.

I had conceived a great Opinion of this *Bishop's* Learning and Abilities, and, if he had not sent (a) two simple *Harbingers* before-hand, should have been so apprehensive of his Acuteness, that nothing, but a thorough Persuasion of the Goodness of my Cause and of my Power to defend it, could have kept me from Flight before him. But I stand my Ground, and shall, against greater Adversaries than this *Bishop*, who has more weakly and maliciously attack'd me, than cou'd have been expected from one of his reputed Candour and Learning; and given me greater Advantages to insult and triumph over him, than I could wish or desire.

(a) His Sermon before the Societies for Reformation; and his Charge to the Clergy.

Many

Many other little *Whiffers* in Divinity have before attack'd me with their *Squibs* and *Squirts* from the *Press*, but I despis'd them all, as unworthy of my particular Regard and Notice, reserving my self for Defence against this *Bishop's* grand Assault; when, by the by, I might have an Opportunity to animadvert on one or other of them. Some of these *Whiffers*, like Men of Honour, have set their Names to their Works; others very prudently have concealed their Names, which, upon the best Enquiry I could make, I have not been able to discover, or I had given them a Rebuke for their Impudence and Slanders. It may be wonder'd, that any polemical Authors, especially when they write on the orthodox and establish'd Side of the Question, should conceal themselves, and that they are not tempted with the Hopes of Reward and Applause to make themselves known. I will say what I think here, that it's never Modesty in such *anonymous* Authors (for we *Scriblers* in Divinity, whatever we may pretend, have always a good Conceit of our selves) but Apprehensions of a sharp Reply to their Dishonour. And this is the true Reason, why some of my Adversaries industriously conceal themselves, knowing that they are guilty of wilful

and malicious Lies and Calumnies, which I should chastise them for. But, as their Names are suppress'd, they know, it's to no Purpose for me to expose their Malice, because no body can be put to shame for it.

The *Bishop* of St. *David's* acts here a more glorious Part: He comes not behind me, like other *Cowards*, to give me a secret Knock on the Pate, but, like a courageous Champion, looks me in the Face, and admonishes me to stand upon my Guard. This is bravely done in him! And I have no Fault to find, but that he is providing himself with *Seconds* in the Controversy, I mean the *Civil Powers*, and calling upon them to destroy me, before the Battle is well begun, and whether he gets the better of me or not. This is not fairly nor honourably done of the *Bishop*, and I have Reason to complain of it. Tho' I think my self equal, if not superior in the Dispute, to any of our *Bishops*, yet I am not a Match for the *King's* Power, neither would I lift up my Hand, or use my Pen against him for all the World. If the *Bishop* will yield to a fair Combat, and desire the Civil Authority to stand by and see fair Play between us, I will engage with him upon any Terms. But to make the *Civil Powers* Parties in our Quarrel,

Quarrel, and to bespeak them, right or wrong, to favour his Side, is intolerable, and what we spiritual Gladiators ought to abhor and detest.

I liked the *Bishop*, when he proposed to the *Queen* to be *Arbitress* of our Controversy. As I will not here question her Qualifications to judge in it; so the first Opportunity I have of waiting on her *Majesty*, I will join my Requests to her to accept of the Trouble and Office. After she has fix'd the Terms of Disputation, and thought of a proper Reward for the *Victor*, or a Punishment for the *Conquer'd*, then will we proceed, and either dispute the Matter from the Press, or scold it out in the *Queen's* Presence, as she shall think it most conducive to the Edification of herself, and of her Court-Ladies.

But the *Bishop's* Proposal here, and Compliment on the *Queen*, is but the Copy of his Countenance. He'll submit to no Arbitration: No, no, he's for having the Civil Powers to be immediate Executioners (without further hearing what I have to say for my self) of his Wrath and Vengeance upon me. He's for having them to take it for granted, that he has prov'd me an *Infidel* and *Blasphemer*, and would have them to inflict some exemplary Punishment

ment upon me, so as to incapacitate me for ever writing more. Wherefore else does he say thus? (b) "Indeed a more proper Occasion cannot possibly happen in a Nation, where Christianity is establish'd by human *Laws*, to invigorate the Zeal of the Magistrate, in putting the Laws in Execution against so flagrant a Sort of Profaneness, that tramples with such Indignity on the Grounds of the *Christian* Faith; and to convince the World that the *Minister* of that *God*, who is so highly affronted, *bears not the Sword in vain*. And certainly the Higher Powers have great Reason to exert their Authority on this and the like Occasions."

I was astonish'd at this Passage, with some others, in the *Bishop's Dedication*, and could hardly believe my Eyes when I read it: That a Scholar, a Christian, and a Protestant Bishop, should breathe so much Fury and Fire for the kindling again of *Smithfield* Faggots! That any Thing of human Shape should so thirst after that Destruction of another, which would turn to the Ruin of his own Reputation and Honour! Does the *Bishop* believe that he has clearly confuted me, or does he not?

(b) In his Dedication.

If

If he believes, and others know, that I am absolutely confuted, then there's an End of the Controversy, the Danger of my *blasphemous* Books is over; and why should I undergo any Punishment, which would move the Compassion of many, and give a greater Reputation to my Writings than they do deserve? Does the *Bishop* think he has confuted me? This is Honour and Triumph enough to him; who, of all Men, should not desire me to be otherwise punish'd, for fear of getting the Character of a merciless and implacable Conqueror. Am I in my own Opinion confuted and baffled? This would be Pain and Mortification enough, even worse than Death. For, however we polemical *Writers* may pretend a Readiness to part with our Errors upon Conviction, as if we could easily yield to our Adversaries; yet it goes to the Hearts of us to be out-done in Reason and Argument. As it is said of *Bishop Stillingfleet*, that, being sensible of his Insufficiency to contend with Mr. *Lock*, he grieved and pined away upon it: So I, upon Supposition the Bishop of *St. David's* has confuted me, must not only necessarily afflict my self, but undergo the Shame of the Reproaches of the People, for my wicked and impotent Efforts to subvert their Religion: And what would
the

the *Bishop* have more? He could desire no more, if he had absolutely confuted me: But it's plain he dares not trust to his own Confutation of me; it's plain he's afraid of, what he is conscious may be made, a smart Reply to him, and therefore he calls upon the Civil Magistrate for his Help to prevent it.

After that the *Bishop* of *London* had publish'd his *Pastoral Letter*, and it was reported that the *Bishop* of *St. David's* was preparing a strenuous Vindication of the *literal* Story of *Jesus's* Miracles, I concluded that the Prosecution would immediately be dropp'd, and that the Clergy were betaking themselves to the Christian, Rational, and Philosophical Course of Confutation, and would no longer make use of Prosecution, which is the Armour of hot, furious, and ignorant Bigots. And there is one Passage in the *Bishop's Pastoral Letter*, which I interpreted as a Grant of full Liberty; but whether I am apt to mistake the Sense of the Fathers of the *Primitive Church* or not, I find I did mis-construe the Words of a Father of our *English Church*, and turn'd them to another and better Purpose than he aim'd at. His Words are these (c), “ And as to the

(c) Page 35.

“ blas-

“ *blasphemous manner*, in which a late
 “ Writer has taken the Liberty to treat
 “ our Saviour’s Miracles, and the Author
 “ of them ; tho’ I am far from contend-
 “ ing, that the Grounds of the Christian
 “ Religion, and the Doctrines of it, may
 “ not be discuss’d at all Times in a calm,
 “ decent, and serious Way (on the con-
 “ trary, I am sure that the more fully
 “ they are discuss’d, the more firmly they
 “ will stand) yet I cannot but think it
 “ the Duty of the Civil Magistrate, at
 “ all Times, to take Care that Religion
 “ be not treated in a *ludicrous* or *reproach-*
 “ *ful* Manner, and effectually to discour-
 “ age such Books and Writings as strike
 “ equally at the Foundation of all Reli-
 “ gion, &c.” What the *Bishop* of *L.*
 here says, of his *thinking it the Duty of*
the Civil Magistrate, at all Times, to take
Care that Religion be not treated in a lu-
dicrous Manner, I understood as an Excuse
 for what he had done in stirring up the
 Civil Magistrate to a Prosecution of me ;
 and that now, like a Philosopher, he was
 for letting Truth and Religion to take its
 Course, and for leaving it to a free Dis-
 cussion, whether in a *ludicrous* or in a
calm, decent or serious Way. But I con-
 fess, I have mistaken the *Bishop’s* Words,
 finding by Experience, that (for all the
 C natural

natural Import of his Expressions, that Liberty should be used to discuss the Grounds of Religion in a *serious* Manner) he'll no more suffer it, if he can help it, to be contested in a *serious*, than in a *ludicrous* Way; wherefore else did he move for the Prosecution of a late *London Journal*, which was all *calm*, *decent*, and *serious* Argument. And the Bishop of St. David's his furious *Dedication* now, confirms me in this Opinion, that our *Clergy* (for all their preaching up Liberty with as much Force and Strength of Reason as any Men, and for all their Invitations to *Infidels*, to say and print their worst against Christianity) will by no means, if they can hinder it, suffer any Attacks to be made upon their Religion, nor cease their Importunities and Sollicitations of the Civil Magistrate to Persecution. Blessed be God, the *Bishops* are not my *Judges* as well as my *Accusers*, or I know, what would become of me.

Mr. *Atkinson*, a little Writer against me, says, (d) " That I call the pretended Divines of the Church my Prosecutors, " when they were not my Prosecutors. " And again, That there was no need of " my Supposition, that the *Clergy* would

(d) *Vindication of three Miracles*, p. 76, 77.

" have

“ have more Wit than to prosecute me
 “ again for this *Discourse*; for he did not
 “ know that they had been concern’d in
 “ any Prosecution of me. And again he
 says, “ If the Civil Magistrate thinks it
 “ his Duty to chastise me for my Sin and
 “ Folly, I am to blame my self, and not
 “ the *Clergy*, till I can prove the Zeal of
 “ our Christian Government to be exci-
 “ ted by the malign Influence of the
 “ *Clergy*.” Mr. *Atkinson* is thus far cer-
 tainly in the right on’t, that, strictly speak-
 ing, the *Clergy* are not my Prosecutors,
 but the King, who, in all probability,
 knows no more of my Books than the
 Man in the Moon. But whether Mr. *At-*
kinson could be so ignorant, as not to
 know the *Clergy* were the grand Instiga-
 tors to Prosecution, let others judge.
 If he really was such a poor *Ignoramus*,
 I have no more to say: Otherwise, his
 Expressions above, will be look’d upon as
 the vilest Piece of Hypocrisy and Prevari-
 cation that can be, purposely utter’d to
 take off the *Odium* of the Prosecution from
 the *Clergy*, and to cast it upon the Civil
 Government; which, whether Mr. *Atkin-*
son believes it or not, had never, but for
 the Sollicitations of the *Bishops*, given me
 any Trouble. Mr. *Atkinson* above acts the
 Part of the Popish Clergy of *France*, up-

on the Revocation of the Edict of *Nants*. After that the King, upon the urgent Importunities of the Clergy, had resolv'd to revoke that Edict; the Clergy were for excusing themselves to the Protestants, and laying the Blame only on the King, saying, *The King was bent and resolv'd on't, and they could not help it*; which was such Jesuitical Prevarication in the Popish Clergy, that the Protestants could not forbear *roguing* them for it. Mr. *Atkinson* knows how to apply this Story; which I had not told, but for the Use of the Bishop of *L.* who, upon a certain Occasion, could say, that it was not He, but the *Government*, that prosecuted Mr. *Woolston*. If Mr. *Atkinson* was really so ignorant as he seems to be, I suppose he is now of another Mind upon reading the *Bishop* of *St. David's* Dedication; and convinced that the Prosecution against me was begun and carried on at the *malign Influence*, as he calls it, of the Clergy.

I will here use no Arguments for Liberty of Debate, which Subject has already been copiously handled, and wants nothing, that I can add unto it. But before I enter into the Body of the *Bishop's* Book, and upon a profess'd Defence of my Discourses against him, let us consider the manifest Lies, Prevarications, and wicked Insi-

Insinuations in his *Dedication*, whereby he would move the Secular Powers to a severe Punishment of me. I will pass by the *Motto* of his Book, *viz. But Jesus said unto him, Judas, betrayest thou the Son of Man with a Kiss?* Whereby he would signify and intimate, not to *Scholars* (for they have more Wit than to think the worse of me for his Abuse of Scripture) but to the ignorant Multitude, that I am another *Judas*, a Traitor and Rebel to *Jesus*. Commonly *Mottos* of Books are suited to their Authors, and the Design of them; whether the *Bishop* will be willing to take this *Motto* to himself or not, I will upon another Occasion give it a pleasant and pertinent Turn upon him. At present I shall only say, what the Learned will observe, that *this* is of a wicked and malicious Use and Intention, of no less, than to create in the Minds of the People an Hatred and Detestation of me; of no other, than by dressing me up, as it were, in a Bear's Skin, to excite the Ecclesiastical and merciless Mob to worry and destroy me. Such has been the roguish Artifice of Priests of all Ages, to represent their Adversaries, whom they would destroy, under odious and borrow'd Names, that their Persecutions of them might

might be thought the less cruel. But passing this by for the present, the

I. First wicked and wilful Misrepresentation that the *Bishop*, in his Dedication, has made of me, is that of being an *Infidel*, and an *Apostate* Clergyman. Wherefore else does he say thus to the Queen? "What is now presented to your
"Rôyal View, is an Apologetical Defence
"of our holy Religion, against one of the
"most virulent Libels on it, by an *Apo-*
"state Clergyman, that has appear'd in a-
"ny Christian Country; and, in Compa-
"rison of which, other *Infidels* have acted
"a modest Part." And again he calls my
Discourses, "A flagrant Sort of Profane-
"ness, that tramples with Indignity on
"the Grounds of the Christian Faith." And again he signifies, "That I am warm-
"ly engaged in subverting the Christian
"Religion, and active in propagating In-
"fidelity." This is all wilful and down-
right Calumny, to incense the Queen and
the Government against me. The *Bishop*
knows in his Heart that I am no *Infidel*,
but a Believer of Christianity, notwith-
standing my *Discourses* on Miracles, that
have occasion'd such a Clamour against
me. In my *Discourses*, I have repeatedly
and most solemnly declared, that my De-
signs

signs are not to do Service to Infidelity, but to advance the Glory of God, the Truth of Christianity, and to demonstrate the *Messiahship* of the holy *Jesus*. If I have sometimes ridiculed the literal Story of our Saviour's Miracles, I have profess'd as often that it was with Design to turn Men's Hearts to the mystical Interpretation of them, on which alone *Jesus's* Authority and Messiahship is founded. I could collect a great Number of Passages out of my *Discourses* to this Purpose, if it would not be wasting of Time and Paper. And do all these solemn Declarations of my Faith, and of the Integrity of my Heart, and of the Sincerity of my Intentions, stand for nothing? Why should not my Word here be taken? I can think of no other Reason, than because some other Folks are accusom'd to dissemble and prevaricate with God and Man in their Oaths and Subscriptions, therefore I may be suspected here of Hypocrisy, notwithstanding my Professions to the contrary.

Besides, the *Bishop* knows by my other Writings, that I am certainly a Christian, and a true Believer of the Religion of Christ, though I may have some different Conceptions from other Men about it. It has been my good Luck before, not only to publish more Treatises purposely and pro-

professedly in Defence of Christianity; than any *Bishop* in *England*; but some of them are of such a Nature, as it's impossible for a Man to write without being a Christian, and impossible for him to depart from the Principles of them. This is my good Fortune and Happiness at this Juncture. The *Bishop* has perused, I see, some of my other Writings, and particularly, my *Old Apology for the Truth of Christianity revived*; and to his Praise, as well as my Comfort, be it spoken, he apprehends and rightly relishes it. And as I was well pleased with his Representation of the Design of that Book, from the Principles and allegorical Scheme of which, he says (in Twenty-four Years since) I am not departed; so I would appeal to his Conscience, Whether a Man, who wrote, as I did then, of the Typical and Antitupal Deliverance of the *Jewish* and *Christian* Church, can possibly be an Infidel, or ever depart from the Christian Faith? If the *Bishop* has Ingenuity equal to his Penetration into that Book, he must own and confess to the World, that I was then, and am still, a Christian, a Man of fix'd and unalterable Principles from that Day to this.

The *Bishop* would be thought in his *Preface* to enumerate all my Writings;
but

but there are three others, whether wilfully or negligently omitted by him, I know not, that are direct Defences of the Truth of Christianity; and there is not a learned *Clergy-man* in *England* (I humbly presume to say it) who can read them, and not applaud them. If the *Bishop* will be pleas'd to read one of them, *viz. The Defence of the Miracle of the Thundering Legion*, and say it from his Heart, that I might write that Book, and believe the Ecclesiastical Story of that Miracle, and yet be no Christian; then I will yield to his Accusation against me for Infidelity.

But why do I trouble myself thus to assert and vindicate my Belief of Christianity? The *Bishop* would readily come into the Acknowledgment of my being a sincere Christian, but for his Interests and Prejudices, and other political Considerations, which influence him and the *Clergy* so to decry and defame me, that, if possible, I must be destroy'd, or at least have my Mouth stopp'd.

In short then, it is not because I am an *Infidel*, that the *Clergy* so exclaim against me and my *Discourses*; but because, as a Christian, I have particular Designs in view, which, if I can compass, will tend to their Dishonour, and the Ruin of their Interests; and therefore, by Defamations
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and Prosecutions, they will, if they can, in time put a stop to them. The Designs that, for the Truth of Religion and Good of Mankind, I have in view, and which, maugre all Opposition, Terrors, and Sufferings, I will pursue to the utmost of my Power, are these Three.

1. To restore the Allegorical Interpretation of the Old and New Testament, that is call'd, say the Fathers, the sublime Mountain of Vision, on which we shall contemplate the Wisdom and Beauty of the Providence of God; and behold the glorious Transfiguration of *Jesus* with *Moses* and *Elias*, that is, the Harmony between the Gospel and the Law and the Prophets, agreeably to *Jesus's* typical Transfiguration. And this is such a glorious and beatifick Vision, that it's enough to ravish our Hearts with the Hopes and Desires of attaining to it. The old *Jews* say, that the Allegorical Interpretation of the Scriptures will lead us to the Sight of God, and convert even *Atheists*. The Fathers say, that the allegorical Interpretation will be the Conversion of the *Jews* in the Perfection of Time; and St. *Augustin* speaks of a great allegorical *Genius* (e),

(e) Cum venerit ergo Elias exponendo Legem *Spiritua-liter*, convertit Corda Patrum ad Filios, *De Civit. Dei*, Lib. XX. c. 39.

that

that will be sent to that Purpose. I believe all this, and being convinced of the Truth of it, I am much addicted to Allegories. And it is plain enough, and wants no Proof, that the Revival of the allegorical Scheme, which I am fond of, portends Ruin to the *Ministry of the Letter*; and will be such an Argument of the Ignorance and Apostacy of our *Clergy*, that it's no wonder they defame, calumniate, and persecute me for my Attempts towards it.

Origen says (f), that *literal Interpreters will run into Infidelity*, which is a Saying I am well pleased with, and thereupon will try, if I can't turn the Tables upon our *Clergy*; I'll try if I can't shift from my self the present Load of Reproaches for Infidelity, and lay it upon them. What would the Wise and the Learned then say? That the great *Bishops* of *London* and *St. David's* had caught a *Tartar*.

I have indeed ludicrously treated the Letter of the Scriptures (in my *Discourses*) which by the said *Bishops* is falsely called *Blasphemy*: But should they either *ludicrously* or *sedately* write against

(f) *Literam Legis sequentes in Infidelitatem & vanas Superstitiones incurrunt. In Matt. Tract. 26.*

the allegorical Sense of them, I could prove *that* to be real *Blasphemy*. However, I would not complain to the Civil Powers against them ; no, it's God's peculiar Privilege to punish that Sin, which ought not to be committed to the Care of the Civil Magistrate.

But what need I *ludicrously* to handle the Letter of our Saviour's Miracles ? Because some sort of Stories are the proper Subjects of *Ridicule* ; and because, *Ridiculum acri fortius & melius*, Ridicule will cut the Pate of an Ecclesiastical Numbskull, which calm and sedate Reasoning will make no Impression on.

To speak then the Truth in few Words. As I am resolv'd at any rate to run down the *Letter*, in order to make way for the *Spirit* of the Scriptures ; so certainly will our Clergy, for their Interests and Honour, as Ministers of the Letter, vilify and reproach me, and pursue me with an implacable Hatred : But I should think it meet for them to use a little more Temper in their Revilings, for fear the Torrent of Reproaches should some time or other turn on them. It is asserted and predicted by the Fathers that, after a certain Time of the Church's Apostacy to the *Letter*, the *Spirit of Life*, or the allegorical Sense, will re-enter the Scriptures, to the Advancement

vancement of divine Knowledge and true Religion; in the mean while the *Clergy* will do well to see it. But,

2. The Second Design which, as a Christian, I have in view, and which occasionally I write for, is an universal and unbounded Toleration of Religion without any Restrictions or Impositions on Men's Consciences; for which Design, the *Clergy* will hate and defame me, and, if possible, make an Infidel of me, as well as for the former. Upon an universal Toleration the World would be at quiet: That Hatred of one another, which is now so visible among different Sects, would then be terminated by a Unity of their Interests, when they are all upon the Level in the Eye of the Civil Magistrate, who would choose Men to Places of Trust, not for their Faith and Affection to Theological Doctrines, but for their Abilities to serve the Publick. In this Case, Ten thousand different *Notions* in Religion would no more obstruct the Welfare of the Community, than so many different *Noses* do the Happiness of this City. The Variety of their Theological Opinions, would be the Diversion and Amusement of each other; and so long as it was out of their Power to oppress, they could not hate one another for them. Such a Toleration,

on, the *Clergy* would persuade us, tends to Confusion and Distraction, as if Men would go to *Loggerheads* upon it. But this is one of their Mistakes; there would be a perfect Calm upon it, if such Incendiaries as they are did not disturb the publick Tranquillity. They'll tell us again, that such a Toleration makes Way for Dissoluteness of Morals, and would let in Sin like a Deluge upon us; but this is another of their Errors. Such a Toleration would promote Virtue, in as much as different Sects of Religion are a Check upon each other against Looseness of Morals, because every Sect would endeavour to approve itself above others, by the Goodness of their Lives, as well as by the Excellency of their Doctrine. But the *Clergy* will never hearken to such a Toleration, because it would be the Downfal of Ecclesiastical Power; for which Reason, among others, I am

3. For the Abolition of an hired and establish'd Priesthood. And for this, if for nothing else, I am sure to be prosecuted with Hatred and Violence, and loaded with the Calumnies and Reproaches of Infidelity and Blasphemy: And the *Clergy*, if possible, will have my Mouth stopp'd, and my Hands tied, before

before I proceed too far in my Labours and Endeavours to this End.

And why should not the *Clergy* of the Church of *England* be turn'd to Grass, and be made to seek their Fortune among the People, as well as Preachers of other Denominations? Where's the Sense and Reason of imposing Parochial *Priests* upon the People to take care of their Souls, more than Parochial *Lawyers* to look to their Estates, or Parochial *Physicians* to attend their Bodies, or Parochial *Tinkers* to mend their Kettles? In secular Affairs every Man chooses the Artist and Mechanick that he likes best; so much more ought he in Spirituals, in as much as the Welfare of the Soul is of greater Importance than that of the Body or Estate. The Church-Lands would go a good, if not a full Step, towards the Payment of the Nation's Debts.

I have promised the World what, by the Assistance of God and the Leave of the Government, shall be publish'd, *A Discourse on the Mischiefs and Inconveniences of an Hir'd and Establish'd Priesthood*: In which it shall be shewn,

I. That the Preachers of Christianity in the first Ages of the Church (when the Gospel was far and near spread, and triumph'd

triumph'd over all Opposition of *Jews* and *Gentiles*) neither received nor insisted on any Wages for their Pains, but were against preaching for Hire ; and, as if they had been endow'd with the Spirit of Prophecy, before an Hireling Priesthood was establish'd, predicted their Abolition and Ejection out of Christ's Church.

II. That, since the Establishment of an *Hire* for the Priesthood, the Progress of Christianity has not only been stopt, but lost Ground ; the Avarice, Ambition, and Power of the Clergy have been of such unspeakable Mischief to the World, as is enough to make a Man's Heart ache to think, read, or write of.

III. That upon an Abolition of our present establish'd Priesthood, and on God's Call of his own Ministers, the Profession of the Gospel will again spread ; and Virtue, Religion, and Learning, will more than ever flourish and abound.

The Clergy are forewarn'd of my Design to publish such a *Discourse* ; and this is the secret Reason, whatever openly they may pretend, of their Accusations against me for Blasphemy and Infidelity. Their Zeal and Industry will be never wanting to prevent the Publication of this *Discourse* ; neither need I doubt of Persecution,

on, if they can excite the Government to it, to that End.

In my first Discourse on Miracles, I happen'd to treat on that of Jesus's driving the Buyers and Sellers out of the Temple; which, upon the Authority of the Fathers, I shew'd to be a Figure of his future Ejection of Bishops, Priests, and Deacons out of his Church, for making Merchandise of the Gospel. The *Bishop* has taken me and that Miracle to task; and, if ever any Man smiled at another's Impertinence, I then heartily laugh'd when I read him. I begg'd of the *Bishop* before-hand (g) not to meddle with that Miracle, because it was a hot one, and would burn his Fingers. But for all my Caution, he has been so Fool-hardy, as to venture upon it; but has really touch'd and handl'd it, as if it was a *burning Coal*. He takes it up, and as soon drops it again to blow his Fingers; then endeavours to throw a little Water on *this* and *that* Part of it to cool it, but all would not do. The most fiery Part of it, *viz.* that of its being a Type of Jesus's future Ejection of mercenary Preachers out of the Church, he has not, I may say it, at all touch'd,

(g) In Dedication of Third Discourse.

E

except

except by calling it (b) *my allegorical In-
vective against the Maintenance of the
Clergy*; which is such a Piece of *Corin-
thian* Effrontery in the *Bishop*, that, was he
not resolv'd to lie and defame at all Rates
for the Support of their Interests, he could
never have had the Face to have utter'd.
If the *Bishop* had prov'd that *that* Mira-
cle (which literally was such a —, as
I dare not now call it) neither was, nor
could be a Shadow and Resemblance of
Jesus's Ejection of hired Priests out of the
Church at his second Advent, and that the
Fathers were not of this Opinion, he had
knock'd me down at once. As he has
done nothing of this, so he might have
spared his Pains in Support of the Letter
of this Story. But I shall have a great
deal of Diversion with the *Bishop*, when
I come, in a proper Place, to defend my
Exposition of that Miracle. In the mean
Time, as the *Bishop* has publish'd one of
the Articles of my Christian Faith, think-
ing to render me odious for it; so here
I will insert another, *viz*, (i) "I believe
" upon the Authority of the Fathers,
" that the Spirit and Power of Jesus will

(b) Page 177.

(i) *Discourse* the Fifth, p. 69.

" *soon*

“ *soon* enter the Church, and expel Hire-
 “ *ling* Priests, who make Merchandise of
 “ the Gospel, out of her, after the man-
 “ ner he is supposed to have driven the
 “ *Buyers* and *Sellers* out of the Tem-
 “ ple.”

Now upon all this, whether the *Bi-
 shop*, modestly speaking, has not been un-
 just, uncharitable, and insincere, to repre-
 sent me as an *Infidel*, I appeal to all learn-
 ed and ingenuous Gentlemen. I am a Chri-
 stian, though not upon the *literal* Scheme,
 which I nauseate, yet upon the *allegorical*
 one. And by the following easy and short
 Argument it may be proved that I am
 most certainly a Christian. I heartily and
 zealously contend for the allegorical Inter-
 pretation of the Scriptures, which the
Bishop allows to be true of me; conse-
 quently I must, and do believe the Scrip-
 tures to be of divine Inspiration, or I could
 not think there were such Mysteries and
 Prophecy latent under the Letter of them.
 Whether then a Believer of the divine In-
 spiration of the Scriptures can be an In-
 fidel (O most monstrous Paradox!) or any
 other than a Christian, judge Readers.
 Nay, if *Origen's* and *St. Augustin's* Testi-
 mony on my Behalf may be admitted, I
 am more truly a Christian and Disciple of
 the Holy Jesus, than any *literal Schemist*

can be. *Origen* says (*k*), That the Perfection of Christianity consists in a mystical Interpretation of the Old and New Testament, of the Historical, as well as other Parts of it. And *St. Augustin* says (*l*), That they who attain to the Understanding of the spiritual Signification of Jesus's Miracles, are the best Doctors in his School. The *Bishop* understands this Argument as well as any Man, and therefore I charge it home upon him, as a wilful and malicious Slander, to call and account me an Infidel in his *Dedication*, on purpose to incense the Government against me at this Juncture.

But the *Bishop* moreover calls me, as above, an *Apostate Clergyman*; and why so? Because I have deserted the *Ministry of the Letter*, and betaken my self to the *Ministry of the Spirit* of the Scriptures. That's like the Wit and Reasoning of his Pate! The *Bishop* is old enough, and has read enough to know that *Apostacy*, in the Sense of the Fathers, is a Desertion of

(*l*) Inveniatur enim in Christianismo non minor (nequid dicam arrogantius) fide Ratio & Enarratio Prophetarum cœnigmatum, parabolarumque evangelicarum, aliarumque innumerarum figurarum, quæ vel in *Gestis* continentur vel Legibus. *Cont. Celsum. Lib. I.*

(*l*) Quidam corporalia ejus Miracula stupentes, majora intueri non norunt. Quidam vero ea, quæ gesta audiunt in Corporibus, nunc amplius in animis admirantur, — Tales nos esse debemus in Schola Christi. *In Serm. xcvi.*

the

the *Ministry of the Spirit*, and a Falling into the *Ministry of the Letter* of the Scriptures; whereupon I make bold to retort upon the *Bishop*, and say of him, and his Episcopal Brethren, that they are *Apostate Bishops*.

But to humour the *Bishop* in his fond *Dedication*, I will suppose my self to be, what I am the farthest of any Man living from being, an *Infidel* and *Apostate*; yet

II. The *Bishop* is a wilful Calumniator, or, at best, an unhappy Misrepresenter of me, and of other Infidels, saying in his *Dedication*, that our Design is *To sap the Foundation of all Government*, and—*That we were pursuing such Methods, as have a natural Tendency to introduce Confusion*. If this was true of us Infidels (for now I speak of my self as one of them) it behoves Civil Governors to look about them, and to punish and suppress us with all speed; and we should be the most unreasonable Men alive, if we complain'd of Persecution, or call'd it hard Usage. And the *Bishop* of *London*, and other *Divines* (like this *Bishop*) do commonly declaim on the Danger of Infidelity to Civil Society, but this is all Ecclesiastical Cant and Jargon. I thought I had given (*m*) the

(*m*) In *Discourse* the Sixth.

Bishop of *London* so much on this Head of Complaint against Infidelity, as I could not suppose the *Bishop* of *St. David's* would ever have repeated it. It is true, what the *Bishop* says, that *Religion is the firmest Support of Government*, and *Christianity especially lays the greatest Obligations, on Mens Consciences, of Obedience to the Civil Powers*. I believe all this, and that the better Christians Men are, the more quiet, peaceable, and useful Subjects, and the greater Friends would they be to the Civil Authority. But does it follow from hence, that we *Infidels*, because we have rejected the Belief of some systematical Divinity, as the *Clergy* are fond of, should consequently be Enemies to the Civil Government, and Foes to the Peace, Order, and Welfare of Society? O fie upon the Drawers of such Consequences! We are, I believe, a numerous and growing Sect in these Nations, though I am acquainted with none, no, not so much as with the Great Mr. *Grounds*: But I could never perceive that any of us, in Principle, were against Civil Government, and the Welfare of the Community; or were for *Confusion*, for setting the People together by the Ears, to the Disturbance of the publick Peace and Tranquillity. No, no, our Interests in the World, as well as
other

other Men's, oblige us to consult the publick Welfare; and our Consciences, from the Religion of Nature, bind us to Obedience to Government; and, was it not agreeable to our Inclination, the Necessity of Affairs would force us to be as quiet and obedient as are any Christians: And I thank God, we have hitherto behaved our selves very peaceably, clear of all Suspicion of Treason and Rebellion to any Prince or State. The *Bishop* hints at Experience to the contrary; but it will puzzle him to give an Instance. One would think, by this common Harangue of *Ecclasiasticks* against us *Infidels*, that Christians, especially the Priesthood, being, as the *Bishop* says, both *under the Penalties of human Laws, and the stronger Impressions of a future State*, were of a Lamb-like Nature, and never given to disturb the Civil Authority: And I will own the Christian *Laity* might be acquitted here, but for the *Clergy*, who have been repeatedly the *Pest* and *Bane* of human Society, the Trumpeters of Sedition and Rebellion, and meer Make-bates in Cities and Families. And I dare say, that if the Civil Powers don't curb, and keep our *Priesthood* in awe, they will upon this present Occasion be the Disturbers of the publick Peace. So little Sense and Truth

is

is there in the *Bishop's* present Investive against us Infidels ! If he had not been infatuated to a Forgetfulness of the *Rogues* of Priests, in all Ages, against the Civil Powers, he could never have insinuated such a groundless and senseless Charge against us, to the Provocation of the Civil Magistrate to fall on us. But

III. The *Bishop* calumniates us Infidels (for against his Conscience, whether I will or not, he will have me to be one of them) not only for being Enemies to Government in general, which he will have us to advance Principles destructive of ; but insinuates and asserts, that we are disaffected to the particular and present Government of these Kingdoms, saying that as “ we are active in propagating Infidelity, we do in the last Resort, not “ only insult the Title of *Defender of the Faith*, but undermine the undoubted “ Right of his Majesty and his Royal Family to the Crown of these Realms, as “ it is founded on the Profession of *Christianity*, reform’d, and now legally settled among us ; and therefore Persons “ of that Character may well be consider’d, as equally false to the Author of “ our Faith, and to the present Government.—Therefore, in a just Sense of “ that Allegiance which is due to the “ King,

“ King and for the Security of your Ma-
 “ jesties, and the Royal Family, and there-
 “ by of the Publick itself, as well as out
 “ of a deep Concern for the Honour and
 “ Preservation of our most holy Faith,
 “ the ensuing Treatise is now offer’d, un-
 “ der your Majesty’s Protection, to the
 “ View of the Publick. ” This is all such
 foolish and manifest Slander, that I can’t
 but think the *Biskop* mad with Rage and
 Indignation at me, when he writ it. I
 dare say, the *Queen*, who is firmly attach’d
 to the Interests of the Christian and Pro-
 testant Religion, did, when she read all
 this, almost grieve for the *Bishop*, and pi-
 ty him for his Weakness and Ignorance. It
 is a Maxim among all Parties, that *Infidels*
 are heartily affected to the present E-
 stablishment of the State; yea, so far a
Maxim, that *Jacobites* and *High-Church-*
Men are apt to accuse all the well-affected
 to the Government, of Infidelity. From
 none of the Writings or Practices of Infidels,
 much less of myself, could the *Bi-*
shop gather any of these his *childish* Sur-
 mises. The Government, since the Suc-
 cession of the Illustrious House of *Hano-*
ver, has been twice attempted to be dis-
 turb’d, and both times by profess’d Chri-
 stians. The Rebellion at *Preston* consisted
 of *Papists* and *High-Church-men*, and tho’
 F there

there were but few *Clergy-men* in Arms, yet they were join'd with the Prayers and Wishes of many Thousands of the *Clergy*, and even, as it was suspected, of some *Oxonian Bishops*. Bishop *Atterbury's* Plot too consisted of Rebellious Christians, without the least Intermixture of us *Infidels*, who are the more zealously affected to the Government, because of the Danger it is sometimes in from the *High-Church Clergy*. Away then with the *Bishop's* Slander, which, for all we may be Unbelievers of Christianity, our Civil Magistrates will laugh at and deride him for. But,

IV. Another Misrepresentation, more foolish and absurd than the former, that the *Bishop* has made of us *Infidels*, is, that we are making Way for Popery and Slavery: For thus he says of us, " Nothing " is more demonstrable, than that those " Adversaries (meaning us *Infidels*) of the " Christian Religion, who are now so busily employed in infusing Doubts into " some weak Minds, in giving an Indifference and Coldness to other well-meaning Persons, and in making others, " that are viciously inclin'd, actual Profelytes to Infidelity, are pursuing such " Methods as have a natural Tendency " to introduce Confusion, and thereby " betray

“ betray us into *Popery*. ” And again he
 says of Infidels, “ That in Consequence
 “ of their own Infidelity, and their wick-
 “ ed Diligence in spreading that Infection,
 “ are bringing in upon us the real Perse-
 “ cutions of the Church of *Rome* ; who
 “ likewise, whilst they rail so plentifully
 “ at the most rational Religion in the
 “ World as Superstition, give great Ad-
 “ vantages towards restoring the insup-
 “ portable *Superstitions* of that Commu-
 “ nion. These are the Persons indeed that
 “ appear in favour of an unbounded Li-
 “ berty, but God grant it may not termi-
 “ nate in an absolute *Slavery*. ” *Risum*
quis teneat ? Who in his Wits could
 write such Stuff ? And who without Impa-
 tience can read it ? I was going about a
 particular Dissection of these two Para-
 graphs, and to lay open the Wit, Sense, and
 Oratory of the *Bishop*, to the Contempla-
 tion of his Admirers ; but I find it unne-
 cessary, as well as tedious to do it : The
 very transcribing of them, and exposing
 them to View, is enough to render him ri-
 diculous. If there be no more Danger of
 Popery, Slavery, Superstition, Tyranny,
 and real Persecution from our *Clergy*, than
 from us *Infidels*, the Nation is safe. *Infidels*
 find too much Inconvenience in the
 Power, Craft, and Follies of a Protestant
 F 2 *Clergy*,

Clergy, to make Way for *Popery*; which, as the *Bishop* rightly says, is a *Complication* of Errors. There are, what the *Bishop* should have thought of, many Protestant Priests for an Accommodation with the Church of *Rome*; and, if I mistake not, upon such easy Terms as *this*, *viz.* If she'll but part with some of her Superstitions that are of no Use to her; our *Clergy* will admit of others as will be of Advantage to them. But *Infidels* are irreconcilable Enemies to the Church of *Rome*, and so far from Wishes and Endeavours to restore *Popery*, that it is meer Nonsense to charge them with either direct or consequential Designs so to enslave Mankind. But

V. The *Bishop* says, that we *Infidels* (for I am one it seems) *labour industriously to root out all Sense of Virtue and Religion among us.* This is sad indeed, if true; and very bad Men should we be, and deserving of the worst Punishment. But this wants Proof. How does he know that we are for rooting out all Sense of Virtue and Religion amongst Men? Does it appear so by our Writings or our Practices? Does he find in our Books any Exhortations to Looseness and Immorality? Nothing of this I am sure. Is he then so well acquainted with *Infidels*, as to know them to be of more depraved and debauch'd

bauch'd Lives than profess'd Christians? Nor this neither. I have not as yet heard that any of my Disciples have been hang'd, lamenting his Misfortune of reading my *Discourses*, as what encouraged him to Sin, and brought him to the Gallows. No, those unhappy People, hitherto, die in the Faith and Communion of the Church, either of *England* or of *Rome*, and hope to be saved through the Merits of our Saviour. Neither do I hear of any Gentleman, old or young, who has given a greater Loose to his Lusts and Passions, since he read my Books. Such News would trouble me.

But because of this Out-cry of the *Bishop*, and of other Preachers against us, that we labour industriously to root out all Sense of Virtue and Religion amongst Men, I wish (for Proof) that *Infidels* were distinguishable from Christians, that a Comparison might be made, and the Difference discern'd between them, as to true Religion and Virtue. Tho' I am one of little Acquaintance with Infidels, yet it is my Opinion that, on this Score, they may vie with, and, all things consider'd, do surpass Christians. One would think by the *Bishop's* Insinuation above, that none but *good* People were of his Christian Faith; and that all Infidels were profligate

fligate Sinners ; but he knows better, and what's more, he should have been more ingenuous than to charge *Infidels* with *Labours to root out all Sense of Virtue and Religion amongst Men*, if it was but in Regard to that learned Gentleman who is supposed to be at the Head of Infidelity, and who, they say, is as exemplary for all social Virtues, as any *Bishop* ; and dislikes Vice and Immorality as much as any Saint can do.

Whatever be the *Virtue* and *Religion* of *Infidels*, it is all genuine, natural, and sincere ; and consequently more Praise-worthy than *that* of hired Priests, who may be suspected of Hypocrisy, because of their Interests. I heard a wild *Spark* say, that he could be as grave as the *Bishop* of *London*, if he was but as well paid for it : Whether he believ'd the *Bishop* would have been as loose as himself, but for his *Hire*, I can't tell. But this is certain that, what can't be said of *Infidels*, there are Priests who put on the Face and Form of Godliness, and want the Life and Power of it ; who lift up their Hands and Eyes unto God, when their Hearts are far from him ; and were not their Interests, more than their Faith, a Restraint to their Lusts, it is commonly believ'd they would be a Company of loose *Blades*.

What

What a Pother is here of the Danger and Mischief of Infidelity to Church and State? Do but take away the Cause of Infidelity, and the Effect ceases. And what is the Cause of Infidelity? Why, what *Origen* predicted, I experience to be true, that the *Ministry of the Letter* is the Cause of it; and I appeal to Mr. *Grounds*, Whether literal Expositions on the Scripture, and the absurd Doctrines which the *Clergy* have built upon the *Letter*, have not been one Cause of his calling into Question, the Truth of Christianity, and the divine Inspiration of the Holy Scriptures? But this is not the only Cause of Infidelity; there are other grand ones, which Dr. *Moore* writes of, saying thus (n):

“ That Men are exceedingly tempted
 “ to think the whole Business of Religi-
 “ on is at best but a Plot to enrich the
 “ Priests, and keep the People in awe,
 “ from observing that they, who make
 “ the greatest Noise about Religion, and
 “ are the most zealous therein, do neglect
 “ the Laws of Honesty and common Hu-
 “ manity; that they easily invade other
 “ Men’s Rights; that they juggle, dissem-
 “ ble, and lie for Advantage; that they

(n) *Mystery of Godliness*, B. x. c. 2.

“ are

“ are proud, conceited, love the Applause
 “ of the People, are envious, fierce, and
 “ implacable, unclean and sensual, merci-
 “ less and cruel ; care not to have King-
 “ doms flow in Blood, for maintaining
 “ their Tyranny over the Consciences of
 “ poor deluded Souls.” If then there is
 any Danger of any kind in Infidelity, let
 the *Clergy* take the Blame and Shame of
 it to themselves, and not lay that Fault,
 which is their own, upon other Men.

But observing that Dr. *Moore* above
 speaks of Priests, their *neglecting the Laws*
of Honesty and *common Humanity*, as a
 Cause of Infidelity, I must here do a piece
 of Justice to Infidels, who place the very
Essence of all Religion (as I believe the
 Essence of Christianity consists) in *common*
Honesty. If they keep to their Principles,
 and act agreeably, they will work such a
 Reformation in the World for the better,
 as the *Priests* of all Ages have not been
 able to do. The *Clergy* have made such a
 Noise in the World about *Faith* and *Doc-*
trine, that the People hardly think they
 need be *Honest* to be good Christians ; and
 even many *Clergymen* are conceited of
 their being *orthodox* and *sound Divines*,
 though by their Dishonesty, Profuseness,
 and Neglect of a Provision for their Fa-
 milies,

milies, they have, in the Judgment of St. Paul (o), deny'd the Faith, and are worse than Infidels.

And thus have I consider'd the Slanders and Misrepresentations of my self and Infidels, contain'd in the *Bishop's Dedication* to the *Queen*, which intirely is such a Piece of Fury, Railing, and Impertinence, as a Man shall hardly meet with. Surely he was not awake when he wrote his *Dedication*, it is so like the *Dream* of a disorder'd Brain, which consists of confused Notions, and scatter'd Ideas, that are never to be compacted together, as to make tolerable Sense, Reason, and Truth. If I had not met with much such flaming Stuff in the Body of his Book, I should have suspected that some body, more a Foe than a Friend to him, had palm'd it upon him, and over-persuaded him to print it, as what would recommend him to her Majesty's Favour.

Whether he'll merit a *Translation* to an *Archbishoprick*, for his Dedication, with me is no Question. For all he may take me for his Enemy, I wish him *translated*, as certainly as the Government has *transported* some other Folks, who are no

(o) 1 Tim. v. 8.

more the Bane of Society. *Bugs* in a House, and *Caterpillars* in a Garden, are not a greater Grievance, than some sort of Ecclesiastical *Vermin* in Christ's Church and Vineyard.

That the *Bishop* himself admires his *Dedication*, and is pleas'd with it, I don't doubt. Like as *Bears* are fond of their ill-favour'd *Cubbs*; so the Brats of some Men's Brains, as well as those of their Bodies, are pleasing to them; and however deform'd and irrational in themselves, are hugg'd by them as so many Wits and Beauties. But whether many, besides the *Bishop* himself, will like his *Dedication*, is a great Question. I don't doubt, but there may be some for Persecution as well as the *Bishop*, and so far may approve of the *Dedication*: But whether there is any one that can think, he has not greatly injured *Infidels*, and made a false Representation of them, for being Enemies to Civil Government, and to our present Establishment, can't surely be question'd. If he be not look'd upon here, by all Mankind, as a wilful and malicious Misrepresenter of them, I shall much wonder at it.

But what's the *Dedication* to the Book itself, will some here say? Tho' the *Bishop* may have made some Slips in his *Dedication*, which betray Weakness and Ignorance;

norance; yet his following Performance may be Strenuous and Nervous, and a compleat Confutation of my *Discourses*. I answer, that such a Dedication bodes ill to the Book; and a Man may as well expect to find the Inside of a House beautiful and richly adorn'd, when the Porch and Entrance into it is mean and nasty; as that an admirable Treatise for Wit, Reason, and Learning, should follow upon such a poor, simple, and insipid *Dedication*. Commonly Authors take more care in their *Dedications*, than in their following Treatise; that is, they see better to the Accuracy of their Expressions, the Exactness of their Stile, and Beauty of their Thoughts; and if they err at all in them, it is only in Flattery, and Excess of Compliments on their Patrons. Such Care too, after the best manner he was able, has the *Bishop* taken in his *Dedication* above; and whatever his Readers and Admirers may think, the *Dedication* is the best Part of the Book. The Exceptions I have taken at the *Dedication* are but small, in Comparison of the Faults I shall find and expose in the *Book* it self; which is such a Complication of Impertinence and Errors, of Rage and Confidence, and of Calumnies and Reproaches, as is not to be equall'd; and is so far

from deserving the Character of a Confutation of my *Discourses*, that it has done them Service ; and will be, after the Animadversions I shall make on it, a Confirmation of the Goodness, Usefulness, and Excellency of my Design in them.

I have not here room to make a compleat Dissection of the *Bishop's* Work, and to display its Insufficiency, in answer to my *Discourses*; neither was it my Design in this *first Part* of my *Defence* to do it. But however, I will spare a Place here for a short Character and Representation of his Performance, which take as follows.

“ The *Bishop's* sole Aim and Design is
 “ to vindicate the *literal Story* of our Sa-
 “ viour's Miracles, against my rational
 “ and authoritative Objections to it. And
 “ to this Purpose he wrangles with me,
 “ where he can, about the Sense of this
 “ and that Citation out of the Fathers;
 “ and after he has forc'd another Sense on
 “ it, than the Words do naturally bear,
 “ then he insults me for a Misrepresenta-
 “ tion. And where he meets with a plain
 “ Testimony out of the Fathers, which
 “ he can't mangle or strain to his Pur-
 “ pose, he silently passes by it; tho' he
 “ would have his *Readers* to believe, he
 “ has vindicated the *literal Story* against
 “ my

“ my Authorities, and shewn that the
 “ Fathers were all on his Side.

“ He complains of my Mutilations of
 “ the Fathers, and of making too curt
 “ Citations out of them; which is true,
 “ but more to my own Disadvantage than
 “ to his. But, what is Matter of grand
 “ Triumph to the *Bishop*, is, that I have
 “ quoted *spurious* Works of the Fathers
 “ for *genuine* ones. And here he takes
 “ great Pains, and wastes Time and Pa-
 “ per, to prove that *this* and *that* Book
 “ does not belong to the Author under
 “ whose Name I cite it; and then has a
 “ Fling at me for want of Skill in *Criti-*
 “ *cism*. But can the *Bishop* be so weak,
 “ as to think, I did not know when I
 “ quoted a *spurious* Work? Supposing the
 “ *Book* I quoted do not belong to the re-
 “ puted Author, but to some other Wri-
 “ ter, what's that to the Question be-
 “ tween us? The Citation is no less the
 “ Testimony of Antiquity, and it's no
 “ matter whose Name it bears. If the *Bi-*
 “ *shop* had thought a little on this, he
 “ might have spared some Sheets of Pa-
 “ per, which he has in vain wasted, to
 “ the Loss of his Readers Time and
 “ Money.

“ Again, where my rational Arguments
 “ against the *Letter* seem to the *Bishop* to
 “ be

“ be weak and inconclusive ; there, to
 “ do him Justice, he handsomely turns
 “ upon me with his Reasoning; and ad-
 “ monishes me of my Spitefulness against
 “ the *Letter*, or I would never use such
 “ a slight Argument. But where I pinch
 “ and bear hard upon the *Letter*, and the
 “ Jest is not to be digested, there instead
 “ of Reasoning against me, he makes a
 “ hideous Out-cry of Buffoonery, Blasphemy,
 “ and Infidelity ; and calls upon the
 “ Civil Magistrate for his Help ; or their
 “ Religion, and their *All* is in Danger,
 “ through the impious Writings of unto-
 “ ward Infidels.

“ The *Bishop* in some Cases gives up
 “ the Cause, and seems himself to be al-
 “ most ashamed of the *Letter* ; and for
 “ the Maintenance of the Honour of *Je-
 “ sus*, and the Dignity of his miraculous
 “ Operation, flies to Allegory ; allowing
 “ that *this* and *that* Miracle might be
 “ typical and figurative of somewhat else,
 “ as his Thoughts did suggest to him.
 “ But here he discovers his poor Talent
 “ at Allegories, making no more Resem-
 “ blance between the *Type* and *Antitype*,
 “ than between an *Apple* and an *Oyster*.

“ I am repeatedly charg’d by the *Bi-
 “ shop* with Infidelity, for writing against
 “ the *Letter*, though I am as grave as a
 “ Judge

“ Judge at the allegorical Interpretation;
 “ and he can’t but know that Infidelity
 “ and Allegorism are incompatible in the
 “ same Person. To prove me an Infidel,
 “ he should have shewn that I meant to
 “ pour Contempt upon the allegorical, as
 “ well as literal Sense of Jesus’s Mira-
 “ cles; but he has not once hinted at
 “ this. A certain great Writer, called
 “ Mr. *Grounds*, plays a double Game
 “ upon the *Clergy*, he laughs at the *alle-*
 “ *gorical* as well as *literal* Scheme, and
 “ distresses the *Clergy* with his Objections
 “ against both. But I have not done so;
 “ I really am, or seem to be, a sincere
 “ Contender for the allegorical Sense.
 “ And to make an *Infidel* of an *Allego-*
 “ *rist*, is more difficult and impossible
 “ than to make a *Monkey* of a *Bishop*.
 “ The *Bishop*, as a *Minister of the Let-*
 “ *ter*, has spoken too favourably of the
 “ allegorical Scheme; he has treated it
 “ with too much Respect, both as to the
 “ Origin and Use of it, and done enough
 “ to sap the Foundation of his Church;
 “ for which, I am afraid, he’ll meet with
 “ a Reprimand from his Episcopal Bre-
 “ thren. The *Bishop* of *Lichfield* is the
 “ Man for my Money, to write against
 “ the allegorical Scheme; he tells us, that
 St.

“ (p) *St. Paul suffer'd in the Esteem of*
 “ *the Jewish Christians for his Neglect*
 “ *of Allegories; and seems to be brought*
 “ *into the Use of them against his own*
 “ *good liking. And again (q), It seems*
 “ *to have been in compliance with Jew-*
 “ *ish Christians, who were affected with*
 “ *allegorick Interpretations, that St. Paul*
 “ *used that way. Which is as much as*
 “ *to say, St. Paul was more a Minister*
 “ *of the Spirit, than of Inclination he*
 “ *was disposed to be, or, in truth, ought*
 “ *to have been; and that, if he took*
 “ *upon him the Ministry of the Spirit*
 “ *for the present, it was only craftily*
 “ *and politically done of him, to catch*
 “ *the Jews in their own Snare of Al-*
 “ *legories. He was consenting that the*
 “ *Preachers of the Gospel, in future*
 “ *Times, should desert the Ministry of*
 “ *the Spirit, and betake themselves to*
 “ *the Letter of the Scriptures, as what is*
 “ *more agreeable to Truth, and condu-*
 “ *cive to the Defence and Propagation*
 “ *of Christianity. Such a Craftsman*
 “ *was the inspir'd St. Paul, in the O-*
 “ *pinion of the Bishop of Lichfield!*

(p) *Defence of Christianity*, p. 347.

(q) *Ibid.* p. 353.

“ How-

“ However, the *Bishop* of St. *David's*
 “ ought to be of the same Mind ; he should
 “ assert, that the *Ministry* of the *Spirit*
 “ was all Apostolical Craft and ancient Er-
 “ ror ; and that the present Generation
 “ of Priests, being wiser, more learned,
 “ and more sincere than the Primitive
 “ and Apostolical ones, do adhere to the
 “ *Ministry of the Letter*. Because the *Bi-*
 “ *shop* has not gone thus far by much, he
 “ leaves more room, than he should, for
 “ the Revival of the *Ministry of the Spi-*
 “ *rit* ; that is, of the spiritual and alle-
 “ gorical Interpretation of the Scriptures.

“ The *Bishop* often reproves me for my
 “ primitive Interpretation of *this* and *that*
 “ Text of Scripture, and then palms his
 “ own forc'd Sense on us, for natural
 “ and genuine, contrary to the Judgment
 “ of all Antiquity.

“ He is so *grave*, serious, and sedate at
 “ some simple Doctrines and Arguments,
 “ that his *Readers* must of necessity laugh,
 “ if not scoff at him. Was I *ludicrously*
 “ to handle the said Doctrines, my *Rea-*
 “ *ders* would hardly smile. Such a wide
 “ Difference is there between the *Levity*
 “ of a Buffoon (as he is pleased to call
 “ me) and the *Gravity* of an Afs, to the
 “ exposing of Religion to the Ridicule and
 “ Contempt of Mankind.

H

“ Lastly,

“ Lastly, He entirely mistakes the De-
 “ sign of my *Discourses*; he knows not
 “ what I aim and drive at. There’s one
 “ Paradox runs through his whole Book,
 “ viz. That the literal Story of our Sa-
 “ viour’s Miracles must of necessity be
 “ true, or I should have no Foundation
 “ to build Allegories upon; which is a
 “ gross Mistake of other Writers against
 “ me, as well as of himself. Who knows
 “ not that the profess’d Parables of *Jesus*
 “ have nothing of *Letter* in them, yet are
 “ a good Foundation for Allegory? And
 “ let me tell him here again, that what-
 “ ever was true, more or less, in the li-
 “ teral Story of *Jesus*’s Miracles, there
 “ is absolute Necessity, for the Honour
 “ and Credit of them, to have Recourse
 “ to the Mystery; or literally they are,
 “ and shall be farther proved such——
 “ Stories, as I dare not at present call
 “ them.

Thus have I given a brief Account of
 the *Bishop*’s mighty and pompous Perfor-
 mance; like to which he has promis’d us
 another Volume, that I shall long for the
 Publication of, next *Winter*. This my
 brief Account is but introductory to fu-
 ture and larger Defences of my *Discourses*
 on Miracles; which, by the Help of God,
 and

and Permission of the Civil Authority, shall be likewise publish'd.

I have not, I say, room here so much as to defend my self on any one Miracle; and if I had, I would not do it. For as I can't do it without writing in the same Stile and Strain for which I am prosecuted, so I will do nothing that may be interpreted as an Act in Defiance and Contempt of the Power of the Civil Magistrate. I did indeed publish two *Discourses* after the Commencement of the Prosecution, because I imagined that our *Bishops* were more in Jest than in Earnest; or if their Passions were raised for the present, I thought, that after a little Consideration of the Unreasonableness of Persecution in general, they would cool upon it, and drop the Prosecution. But since they are in Earnest, and I must answer to the Civil Powers for some supposed Crimes in my *Discourses*, I'll not repeat here the like Acts, but be quiescent in respect to the said Powers, to whom Reverence and Obedience is justly due. For, tho' I look upon the Ecclesiastical Power as an Usurpation on the Consciences of Mankind; yet the *Civil* is Sacred, is God's Ordinance, and ought to be regarded as such. But if I survive the Prosecution, and escape with my Life and Liberty, which I don't

v and vi

despair of, under so wise, just, and good a Magistracy as this Nation is bless'd with, the *Bishop* may expect a strenuous Defence of my self against his weak Assaults on me.

If our *Bishops* were any thing *Heroical*, they would stop the Prosecution, and let the Controversy take its free Course. If they had any Sense of Honour and Reputation, any Regard for their Learning, they would set any Adversary of their Church at Defiance, and disdain the Assistance of the Civil Magistrate to punish him, whom they could not confute. It is the Office of the *Bishops* and *Priests* of the Church, or I know not what is, to convert *Infidels*, to refute *Hereticks*, and by Reason and Argument to put to Silence all *Gainfayers*. Wherefore have they a liberal and academical Education, but to qualify them for this Work? Wherefore do they receive large Revenues of the Church, but to oblige and encourage them to it? Nothing more unreasonable, than that Men should receive Wages, when they don't do their Work. What will the People say hereupon less, than that an Army of at least Twenty thousand Blackguards of the Church are hired to little or no Purpose? The meanest of the People may as well be taken to Church Preferments,

ments, as our reputed learned Divines. They can discharge other Ecclesiastical Offices; and when they are distress'd with an Objection to their Religion, can do no worse than call upon the Civil Magistrate for his Aid and Assistance. But after all, I am inclin'd to think our *Bishops*, in Honour, would forbear Persecution, but for their Interests, call'd their *All*, which depend on the Issue of this Controversy.

However, not to urge the Argument for Liberty of Debate any farther, which has been already by others treated on to Perfection, and will be again resumed, I doubt not, by some body else, on occasion of this *Bishop's Dedication*, I can't but take Notice here how unpolitick, as well as unchristian, some Dissenters are in this Controversy, being, such as Dr. *Harris*, and Mr. *Atkinson*, no less for Persecution than the *Clergy*. If they had a Regard to their own Interests and Liberties, they would be silent. Infidels (of whom I am none) should be consider'd as Dissenting Brethren, whom they should not be forward to oppress, for fear in time, and by degrees, it should come to their own Turn. Our *Dissenters* indeed, collectively, are vastly numerous, and a potent Party, but may trust too much to their
own

own Strength and Numbers. Taking them separately, they may possibly be extinguish'd by Ecclesiastical Art and Craft. If Blasphemy is a just Pretence for the Prosecution of me, the *Clergy*, upon Occasion, can urge the same Crime against them. I'll tell them a Story. The *Calvinists* and *Socinians* were once equally tolerated in *Poland*, and if they had been fast Friends to each other, the *Papists* could never have suppress'd them: But the *Calvinists* joining with the *Papists*, and urging them to complain against the *Socinians* for Blasphemy, in denying the Divinity of the Son of God, moved the Civil Authority to a Banishment of them; and the *Socinians* had not been long suppress'd, before the *Papists* accus'd the *Calvinists* of no less Blasphemy, in denying Adoration to the Virgin *Mary*; and so they were sent packing too; otherwise they might both have enjoy'd their Liberty to this Day. The Application of the Story is easy. So if all we *Dissenters* from the Church, whether we like one another's Principles or not, don't hold together for the Preservation of our Liberties, 'tis easy for Ecclesiasticks to feign an Accusation of *Blasphemy* against any of us. We have no Security, but in the Wisdom and Goodness of an excellent

lent Government, which, if the *Clergy* should ever get on the Back of, its hardly a Question, whether they would not drive, *Jehu* like, most furiously.

But to return to my *Bishop*. I once thought he would never have been drawn into this Controversy. Some time after the Publication of my Third *Discourse*, which, for a visible Reason, I dedicated to him, and invited him to Battle, I asked a dignify'd *Clergy-man*, Whether the *Bishop* would write against me? He answer'd, No: Whereupon I concluded, that he had a Scent of somewhat, not here to be mention'd. But my repeated Provocations of him afterwards, have forc'd him, against Inclination, to engage me. His Passion got the better of his Reason, or he had been certainly quiescent: And the Violence of his Passion is so visible, through his whole Book, that 'tis God's great Mercy it did not throw him into a Fever and Convulsions, to the Danger of his Life and Health.

I own here again, what I have done before, that I did lay a Trap for our *Clergy*; but little imagined that two such great *Bishops*, as of *London* and St. *David's*, would, to my Pleasure and Satisfaction, have been caught in it. If I had not baited my Trap well with *Ridicule*,
I dare

I dare say, they would have kept themselves clear of it.

But when I experienc'd the hard Usage the Bishops had given me upon my *Discourses*, and the Fury with which they attack'd me, it surprized me, and brought to my Mind *Origen's* Prediction (r) of this *very* War and Controversy of the *Spirit* against the *Letter* of the *Scriptures*, and of the Violence it would be carried on with. For all my Veneration for the Authority of the Fathers, I did here suspect the Truth of *Origen's* Prediction, believing him to be mistaken, and that the Controversy would be manag'd in a *calm*, *decent*, and *sedate* Manner; and so it had been, but for the Interests of the *Clergy* that are at Stake in it, which I was not aware of. Finding then the Truth of *Origen's* Prediction contrary to my Expectations, I had the Curiosity farther to consult the Fathers about the Issue of this Controversy; and they presently, with their mystical Fingers, pointed to a Prophecy of it in the *Revelations* of St. *John*; but, to say no more at present, assur'd

(r) Est adhuc alia Pugna his omnibus violentior; quod ii, quod Legem secundum Carnem intelligunt, adversantur his, qui secundum spiritum sentiunt, & persequuntur eos. In *Genesis*, *Hom.* vii.

me, that the *Spirit* would get the Better of the *Letter* in the Conclusion of it. Tho' I am accounted an Infidel, I am so easy and credulous a Christian, as to believe all this; and I thank God have so much Courage in me, as to try the Truth of it.

But I must observe here, that besides my two *Bishops*, of *London* and *St. David's*, (and some other inconsiderable *Triflers*) there are two *anonymous* Authors against me, whose Works have acquir'd some Fame. The One is entitl'd, *The Miracles of Jesus vindicated, in Three Parts*. If I could have gotten to the certain Knowledge of the Author, I should have been tempted to have had a Bout with him; and to have expostulated with him, both with Regard to his Arguments and good Manners. I would have taught him a better Use, and a more proper Application of the Words *Dishonesty*, and *Want of Honesty*, than to reproach me with them. Common Fame says, Dr. *Pearse*, of *St. Martin's*, is the Author; but I am apt to think, the *King's* Parish-Priest, and other City *Divines*, have more Wit and Craft than to upbraid me as above, for fear a just Charge of *Dishonesty*, for their Extortions and Exactions on the People, should be retorted on them.

ON THE

I

Upon

Upon the Publication of the *First Part* of the 'foreſaid Treatiſe, my *Jewiſh Rabbi* comes to me in all Haſte, ſaying to me, " Look you here ; do you ſee how this " Author has new-vamp'd the old *mumpſimus* Argument of *Jeſus's* Reſurrecti-
 " on ? Do you obſerve how imperfectly, " here and there, he answers my Objec-
 " tions to it ; and ſilently ſlips by ſome " knotty Pieces of them, that were too
 " hard for him to untie ? " Yes, *Rabbi*, ſaid I, I do obſerve all this ; (and what I have obſerv'd ſince, he argues, awkwardly and backwardly, for the Certainty of *Jeſus's* other Miracles, from his Reſurrection.) My *Rabbi* preſently re-inforc'd his Reſurrection-Objection againſt this Author, and would have had me to print it. No, no, *Rabbi*, ſaid I ; you may print it your ſelf, if you dare. I muſt wait to hear how Cauſes will go in *Weſtminſter-Hall*, next Term, before I involve my ſelf in another Law-Suit. Beſides, *Rabbi*, they ſay, I don't really thus cor-
 reſpond with a *Jew*, but do only perſonate one ; and the *Biſhop* of St. *David's* hints, that I am answerable to publick Juſtice for ſo doing. Here my *Rabbi* ſtamp'd with Indignation ; ſaying, What if you did perſonate a *Jew* ? Is it not lawful, and in Uſe with your *Divines*, to
 write

write Conferences between a Christian and a Jew? And do you any more in this Case? Yes, *Rabbi*, said I, it is lawful to write such like Conferences, and to make *Jewish* Objections to Christianity, when they are no stronger than may be easily dissipated: But when Men write from the Heart, as you do, and raise a D - - l that our *Clergy* can't easily lay, it is, they say, intolerable, and punishable; and either you or I, in the Opinion of the *Bishop*, ought to suffer for it.

The other considerable *Treatise* against me, is that of *The Trial of the Witnesses of the Resurrection of Jesus*; which is an ingenious Piece, and I was well pleased with it. Some time after the Publication of this *Treatise*, I made my Jewish *Rabbi* a Visit, when, drinking a *Dish* of Tea together, we talk'd it over; and my *Rabbi* was pleased to deliver his Sentiments of it in this fashion: "Whoever was the
 " Author of this *Treatise*, God knows;
 " but he's certainly a Friend to my Ob-
 " jections against *Jesus's* Resurrection,
 " which he has fairly stated; but is so
 " far from fully confuting all of them,
 " that he discovers a Consciousness, here
 " and there, that they are unanswerable.
 " It is commonly reported that *Bishop*
 " *Sherlock* is the Author of this *Treatise*,
 I a " but

“ but this Report I look upon as an Ar-
 “ tifice of the Booksellers to make it sell
 “ well ; or rather the Author’s contrived
 “ *Banter* upon the *Clergy*, and their weak
 “ Christian Brethren, to try how far they
 “ may be imposed on, and drawn into the
 “ Approbation and Admiration of a Trea-
 “ tise, that really makes against them.
 “ There is but very little in this Trea-
 “ tise, to make it reputed a sufficient An-
 “ swer to my Objections, excepting the
 “ Verdict of a *Jury*, who brought in the
 “ Witnesses of the Resurrection, *Not guil-*
 “ *ty*, of either Fraud or Mistake in it.
 “ Bishop *Sherlock* can’t be the Author of
 “ this Treatise, if for no other Reason
 “ than this, that *that* Author is visibly
 “ against that Ecclesiastical Wealth and
 “ Power, which the *Bishop* is possess’d of,
 “ and does think not disagreeable to the
 “ Mind of Christ and his poor Apostles.
 “ If any *Bishop* is the concealed Author
 “ of this Treatise, he must secretly be of
 “ the Opinion of the atheistical Pope,
 “ who said, *Quantum nobis profuit hac*
 “ *de Christo Fabula*, what vast Advantage
 “ has the Story of Christ been to us
 “ Popes and Bishops.” I readily gave into
 the Opinion of my *Rabbi*, and wonder’d
 Bishop *Sherlock* did not so much as by
 a publick Advertisement clear himself of
 being

being the Author of this Treatise, and so put a Stop to the Report. It may be the *Bishop* is above the Scandal of it; but I was so concern'd for his Reputation, that I drew up a *Vindication* of him from the Slander of it; which I had publish'd, but for my *Rabbi's* farther Thoughts about the Resurrection of *Jesus* inserted in it, that our *Bishops* might have possibly taken Offence at. So I dropp'd that Design at present, but hope still for an Opportunity to publish the said *Vindication* of the *Bishop*, by which I don't doubt but to merit his Friendship and Favour.

But whoever was the real Author of the foresaid Treatise, I humbly and heartily beg of him to publish, what in the Conclusion of it, he has given us some Hopes of, *The Trial of the Witnesses of the Resurrection of LAZARUS*, because my *Rabbi's* Objections to it are a Novelty and Curiosity, which, by way of such a Reply to them, I should be glad to see handled.

But having here by Chance mention'd my *Rabbi's* Letter concerning *Lazarus's* Resurrection, it brings to my Mind a Challenge I made to the *Bishop* of London upon it, *viz.* (s) "If he would publish an

(s) In Fifth Discourse, p. 67.

“ Answer to that Letter, and vouchsafe
 “ me the Pleasure of a Reply to it ; then
 “ (to save the *Civil Magistrate* Trouble)
 “ I would suffer such Punishment that
 “ he in his Clemency should think fit to
 “ inflict on me, for what’s past.” An in-
 genuous *Clergy-man*, upon reading this,
 said, that the *Bishop* was bound, in Ho-
 nour, to accept of my Challenge, or, what
 was in his Power, in Generosity, to put a
 Stop to the Prosecution. But the *Bishop*
 is not of his Mind. And for what Rea-
 son he does not accept of my Challenge,
 is best known to himself, and others will
 conjecture. If he had not condescended
 to write against me in his *Pastoral Letter*,
 I should have imagined, that he thought
 it beneath the Dignity of One of his ex-
 alted Station in the Church, to set his
 Wit (for dignified Priests, for the most
 part, think their Wit and Learning pro-
 portion’d to their Wealth and Power) a-
 gainst such a poor Author as I am. But
 this is not the Reason. It may be, he
 thinks his Reputation and Honour secure
 in the Height of his Grandeur, and that
 his Dependents will admire his Learning
 nothing the less for his Neglect of my
 Challenge. However it be, this I will say ;
 that were we upon the Level in the World
 as to Fortune, as well as we are to Age
 and

and Education; the Learned would despise him for declining the reasonable Challenge of one, whom he has injuriously treated and persecuted. It's to no Purpose to challenge him here afresh; he, being purpos'd to carry the Matter with an high Hand, has taken other Measures, and is resolv'd to make use of his Power and Interest to suppress him, whom with Reason and Argument he can't convince.

However, I will here make another Proposal to the *Bishop* of *St. David's*. Because he thirsts after a very severe Punishment of me, or he would not be so warm in his Exhortations of the Government to that Purpose, I'll tell him how he may glut his Revenge, and inflict a greater Punishment on me, than, in all probability, the Civil Magistrate will humour him in. If he'll but put a Stop to the Prosecution at present (which is not out of the Power of our *Bishops*, whatever they may pretend) and let the Controversy go on, till I have finish'd my Reply to his *two Volumes*, which shall be done with all Expedition; then, if his Passion is not allay'd, I will submit to any Punishment, he in his Wisdom and Justice, without Mercy, shall think fit to have laid on me, whether it be to Death or Imprisonment. And what would he, or any implacable Priest

Priest, desire more? This Proposal makes him my Judge as well as my Accuser, and if he be not the most unreasonable Man alive, he must accept of it. All my Hopes here are, that his Reason may recover its Dominion over his Passion, against the Conclusion of my *Defence*, or it will go hard with me. If the *Bishop* will not comply with this Proposal, I shall conclude, he's possess'd with the only certain and allegorical *Satan*, mention'd in my *Discourses*; and I shall be confirm'd in the Opinion of St. *Hilary* (whose Testimonies about Devils the *Bishop* has silently pass'd by, without any Charge upon me for Misrepresentation) that there are no worse *Devils* in the World, than the calumniating, furious, and persecuting Tempers of Mankind. The *Bishop*, by the by, has taken Pains to prove there are other *Devils*, of an infernal, frightful, and independent Nature, and of a more certain Existence than *Hobgoblins*; and he gravely asserts, that three of those *Devils* enter'd into each *Hog*, that ran violently down-hill; thereby making the little *Pigs* to carry as great a Burden as the old *Boars* and *Sows*, which should have been better thought of by him. The *Bishop*, perhaps, for these my Descants, will say I am an Infidel; but I assure him, it is one
of

of the Articles of my Primitive and Christian Faith, that the old *Dragon*, *Satan*, the *Serpent*, or the *Devil*, mentioned in the *Revelations*, is no other than the furious, violent, and persecuting Spirit in Man; which, upon the World's getting Liberty of Religion, will be bound and chain'd. And it is the Opinion of Thousands, as well as of my self, that Mankind will never be happy, nor at Rest, 'till this *Devil* is exorcis'd out of the Priesthood, and so of consequence chain'd up. According to the primitive Way of interpreting the *Revelations* of St. *John*, the Time is near at hand for the *binding* this Apocalyptical old *Dragon* or *Satan*, that has pester'd the World through all Ages past. All the Honour that I desire, is, by my Studies and Endeavours to be contributing to so great a Work, for the Good and Happiness of Mankind.

To conclude. I have been the more expeditious in printing of this Discourse, not only for fear the *Bishop's Vindication* (as it is call'd) should have a *malign Influence* upon some People, I don't mean our *Civil Magistrates*, who are wiser and more learned than to be guided by such outrageous Stuff; but because he should not long triumph in a Conceit of the Potency and Excellency of his Performance,

as if no Reply could or would be made to it. If I had at this Time enjoy'd free Liberty of Debate, I should not have thought it worth my while to meddle with his *Dedication*, which with a Scorn I should have pass'd by, and left to the Animadversions and Chastisement of other Enemies to Persecution; but would immediately have enter'd upon a Defence of my *Discourses* against him. If I do retrieve my Liberty, and the free Use of my Pen, and should not publish Defences of my self, I should deserve (what *one* said the Bishop of *London*, for his declining my Challenge, deserv'd) to be piss'd upon for a vain Pretender to Argument and Authority.

In the mean time, I have nothing to request of our *Clergy*, but that Liberty of Debate may be indulg'd us; *that* Liberty of Theological Disputation, which would be granted, if they did not industriously labour to obstruct it. When will they cease to disgrace Truth, to dishonour their Religion, and to disparage their own Education and Learning; and no longer envy Mankind the blessed Enjoyment of such a Liberty!

But their Religion, they say, would be in Danget upon such a Liberty. How can that be? How can Christianity be in

Danger,

Danger, that has not only the Omnipotence of God on his Side, but a numerous standing Army of Priests, hired for the Defence of it? It is not then their Concern for Religion, that prompts them to so much Zeal here; but their Fears for their Interests, that depend on the Issue of this Controversy.

Was I to write against any other honest *Trade*, that is practised in this City, the Artificers of it, being sensible of the Usefulness of their Craft, would let me go on unmolested; and only pity and despise me for the Vanity of my Attempt to subvert them: But the *Clergy*, being prick'd with a Consciousness of the Mischiefs and Inconveniencies of their Establishment, do therefore thus winch and kick.

And who, besides the *Clergy*, are at this time Enemies to Liberty? None hardly, but their immediate Dependents, whom they can easily infuse their fiery and furious Notions into. Was it to be voted this Day among the learned *Laity*, I dare say, the Friends of Persecution would be found vastly short of the Numbers of their Adversaries. And I hope to God, the Legislative Authority of these Nations will soon take the Matter into their Consideration; and either limit or enlarge the Bounds of Liberty, that honest and well-

meaning Men may be no longer harrafs'd and molested, for their sincere Endeavours to serve the Publick.

No body, I trust, can complain of any disrespectful Usage, I have here given the *Bishop* of St. *David's*, that considers, how he has treated me in *his Sermon before the Societies for Reformation*; and in *his Charge to the Clergy of his Diocese*; as well as in *his Vindication*. It would be sufficient, if I had no other Excuse for my self than *this*, That Controversy is like a *Game at Foot-ball*, in which, if a *Lord* will engage with a *Plowman*, and should meet with a Kick on the Shins, he ought not to complain of the ill Manners of it: So if a *Bishop* will dispute with one of lower Degree, he must look for a Rub on his Intellects, a Rap on his Pate, and if his Adversary cuts him on a soft Place, he should know how to bear it with Patience. But the *Bishop*, contrary to this *Game-Rule* in Controversy, complains (t) of my *unmannerly* Treatment of him, and cries out of the Sufferings and Reproaches he undergoes, as if he was already more than half a Martyr for Religion. I can't pretend to equal him in Reproaches and Sufferings, having not

(t) In his Preface, p. 17, 18.

so quick a Sense of them; and therefore I am willing, that good Christian People should pity my poor *Bishop*, rather than me, in a persecuted and sorrowful Condition.

How long it will be, before I publish another, and *second* Part of my *Defence*, is uncertain, for a Reason, that I need not again mention. But if it please God, that I enjoy Life, Health, and Liberty, I'll go on with my Designs. I am resolv'd to give the *Letter* of the Scriptures no Rest, so long as I am able by Reason and Authority to disturb it. If our Ministers of the *Letter* will not ascend, with me, the sublime and allegorical *Mountain* of divine Contemplation, they shall have no Comfort nor Enjoyment of themselves in the low *Valley* of the *Letter*, if I can disquiet them. Notwithstanding what the *Bishop* has written in *Vindication* of *Jesus's* Miracles, the literal Story of them, by the Leave of God and of the Civil Magistrate, shall be afresh attack'd, and perhaps with more *Ridicule* than I used before. What should I flinch for? the literal Story of *Jesus's* Miracles is not, in the Opinion of the Fathers as well as of my self, agreeable to Sense and Reason; neither can *Jesus's* Authority and Messiahship be founded on the *Letter* of them.

I am

I am not for the *Messiahship* of a carnal *Jesus*, who cured the bodily Diseases of Blindness and Lameness; but for the *Messiahship* of the spiritual *Jesus*, who will cure the Blindness and Lameness of our Understandings. I am for the *Messiahship* of the spiritual *Jesus*, who will expel the mercenary Preachers out of his Church, after the manner that *Jesus* in the *Flesh* is supposed to have driven the Sellers out of the Temple, which literally is but a sorry Story. I am for the *Messiahship* of the spiritual *Jesus*, who exorcised the furious and persecuting Devils out of the Mad-men of *Jews* and *Gentiles*; and tho' he permitted them to enter into a Herd of Ecclesiastical Swine, yet will precipitate them into the Sea of Divine Knowledge. I am for the spiritual *Jesus*, who will cure the *Woman* of the Church of her *Issue of Blood*, that is shed in Persecution and War; which her Ecclesiastical Physicians, and Quack-Doctors of the *Clergy*, have not been able to do, tho' they have received large Fees and Revenues to that End. I am for a spiritual *Messiah*, who will cure the *Woman* of the Church of her *Infirmity*, at the Spirit of Prophecy, of whose *Infirmity* this Age is her *eighteenth* Year. So could I write of all *Jesus's* Miracles; for the whole Evangelical History

History is Figure and Shadow of the spiritual *Jesus*, whom we should *know to be in us of a Truth, unless we be Reprobates*. The *Clergy*, if they are not wilfully blind, may hence see my Christian Faith and Principles; and be assured, that what I do in this Controversy, is with a View to the Honour of God, the Advancement of Truth, the Edification of the Church, and Demonstration of the Messiahship of the Holy *Jesus*, to whom be Glory for ever. *Amen.*

F I N I S.



[illegible]